R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 020 588 EA 001 451

THE TEACHER SUBCULTURE AND CURRICULUM CHANGE.

BY- WILLOWER, DONALD J.

PUB DATE MAY 68

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.20 28P.

DESCRIPTORS- SUBCULTURE, *ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, *SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, *CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, *SOCIAL SYSTEMS, SOCIALIZATION, DISCIPLINE, *CLASS MANAGEMENT, TEACHER ROLE, PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS, EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES, BUREAUCRACY, TEACHER ADMINISTRATOR RELATIONSHIP, TEACHER ATTITUDES, TEACHER BEHAVIOR, ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, PHILADELPHIA,

THIS FACULTY SEMINAR PAPER VIEWS THE SCHOOL AS A SMALL SOCIETY OPERATING WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF NORMS AND ROLES. TO DETERMINE THE PRIMARY FEATURES OF THE TEACHER SUBCULTURE, A 14-MONTH FIELD STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, AND OBSERVATIONS OF TEACHER SOCIALIZATION AND PUPIL CONTROL WERE COMPARED FOR SCHOOLS FOLLOWING CUSTODIAL AND HUMANISTIC PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGIES. SUPPORTED PREDICTIONS INCLUDE--(1) TEACHERS ARE MORE CUSTODIAL IN PUPIL CONTROL THAN PRINCIPALS OR COUNSELORS, (2) SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS ARE MORE CUSTODIAL THAN THEIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNTERPARTS, AND (3) INCREASED CUSTODIALISM ACCOMPANIES TEACHER SOCIALIZATION. IN ITS WIDER SOCIAL SETTING THE SCHOOL IS CONCERNED WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT, A REPUTATION FOR INNOVATION, AND SPECIALIZATION TO MAKE ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT LESS BURDENSOME. WHILE CURRICULUM CHANGE IS TRADITIONALLY REGARDED AS A RESPONSIBILITY OF A TEACHERS' CURRICULUM COMMITTEE, RESULTS ARE USUALLY MINIMAL BECAUSE OF THE NORMATIVE ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM. EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM CHANGE EMANATES MORE CLEARLY FROM PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SOURCES OPERATING OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM OF CONSTRAINTS THAT DETER SCHOOL PERSONNEL. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT A FACULTY SEMINAR (TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, PHILADELPHIA, MAY, 1968). (JK)

THE TEACHER SUBCULTURE AND CURRICULUM CHANGE*

Donald J. Willower

Professor of Education
The Pennsylvania State University

In this paper some ideas about schools and their personnel will be presented and an effort will be made to relate these ideas to some of the problems of curriculum change. The general perspective portrays the school as a small society and gives particular attention to the teacher subculture. The approach is basically sociological. However, our interests go beyond social science. We are concerned with the relationship of theory and practice and with the uses of knowledge. We want to understand schools better because we hope for their improvement. Although its possibilities have seldom been realized, the school is taken to be an agency with the potential for broadening and enhancing human life.

As I understand curriculum as a special area of study, it has usually dealt with school subjects, their aims, their content, and their methods; and students of curriculum have sought to inter- relate school subjects and experiences so that they make sense in terms of an overall school program and in terms of social and individual needs.

Appropriate literatures range across the proper goals of formal education, the various relationships of school and society, the psychology of teaching and learning, instructional media and

---

*Paper presented at a Faculty Seminar, Temple University, May, 1968.

materials, the organization and placement of school subjects, and the structure of disciplines. There is also a body of writing on the processes of curriculum change that, in the main, has tended to emphasize participative techniques.

The approach used here fits none of these literatures very well. Although Waller described the school as a miniature society in a book published in 1932,[1] his work had little impact in the curriculum area, or for that matter, in any of the usual areas of study in education. I will not argue that to view the school in terms of social system concepts is necessarily a truer approach than others; only that it seems to me to be an especially useful way to look at schools, and that the perspective has not been fashionable in the past, and thus, can add to the frameworks available to curriculum researchers.

In examining the school as a small society, our stance will be much like that of the cultural anthropologist observing a primitive society. We will be interested in the school's rituals and celebrations, its traditions and its taboos. We will want to know something of its chiefs and witch doctors, its clans and its totems. While the usual applications of the concepts of cultural anthropology to education treat the school as a socializing agency for the larger society, our primary focus will be the teacher subculture.

We will approach the school with a critical frame of mind. That means that we will question things that often are taken for granted. The obvious and the commonplace may provide important data and we wish to maintain an openness to data. At the same time, we recognize that one looks in a special way for data that are suggested by

the theoretical framework he employs and we know that it is the interpretation the investigator imposes upon data that gives it meaning. So we carry theoretical baggage. It consists of familiar concepts such as norms, rules, role expectations, formal and informal structure, latent and manifest functions, and others.

In my portrayal of the school, I will draw upon my own work and that of others. I want to begin with a field study conducted in a single Junior High School. Although it eventually led to a larger scale inquiry that tested hypotheses in a more conventional way,[2] the field study is an example of what has been called qualitative research.[3] Its purpose was to generate hypotheses and develop ideas. We attempted to do this by describing and analyzing the school in essentially social system terms. This was the way we chose to make sense of our data, a substantial amount of which was gathered over the 14-month period that marked the empirical phase of the study.

Our techniques were primarily observation and interview. Observations were made in the faculty lounge, in the corridors, in the cafeteria, in classrooms, in the assembly, and in faculty and administrative meetings. Interviews ranged from those that were quite structured to almost casual conversations. Frequently, interviews were conducted to follow-up on clues and hunches that grew out of earlier observations and interviews. We kept a journal in which we recorded our field notes. It included observational and interview data and our own reactions to the data, often from a common sense perspective but sometimes in more refined theoretical terms. We tried to maintain an ongoing dialogue between the descriptive and the conceptual with expla-

nation as our eventual goal.

One area of special interest was that of principal-teacher relations. The principal was new to the school and we hoped that the phenomenon of succession might serve to highlight and sharpen certain aspects of the social system. It did. Teachers strongly expressed their desire that the new principal not be "weak on discipline;" they wanted to be able to depend upon his backing in confrontations with pupils and, when the occasions arose, with parents.[4] These points were made many times during teacher interviews. Perhaps the principal was more than usually suspect because the teachers were aware that he had a background of training and experience in guidance counseling.

He appeared to sense the teachers' views and he used corporal punishment on a number of occasions although he indicated in interviews that he found it distasteful. A revealing feature was that he often joked with faculty members about "the paddling," and provided humorous anecdotes that were widely quoted among the teachers. Manifestly, paddling was a penalty for rule breaking by students; latently, it provided the principal with an opportunity to dramatize his support of the teachers and thereby gain their approval. He succeeded generally in this but not fully. Thus, near the close of the school year, some of the teachers pointedly noted that he had suspended fewer pupils than his predecessor had during a typical year, an interesting illustration of Gouldner's "Rebecca Myth."[5]

The faculty had its Old Guard. It consisted of older, more experienced teachers with relatively long tenure at the school. They held generally conservative views on teaching and teachers and placed

heavy emphasis on pupil control and discipline. A younger group of teachers who generally had been teaching at the school for shorter periods of time had more liberal and permissive sentiments. The older teachers were dominant in the informal structure of the school and they did not hesitate to give advice to their younger colleagues whom they thought of as being lax about maintaining sufficient social distance with regard to pupils.

The flow of communications of this kind was, in the main, in one direction, from the older teachers to the newer teachers, not the reverse. Frequently, the advice was direct and to the point but sometimes it was indirect although no less clear, as when it was remarked that it took longer than usual to settle a class after it had come from Mr. X's room; no one missed the implication that there was a kind of carry over of the chaos that characterized Mr. X's room but which was out of place in an orderly and proper classroom.

The newer teachers clearly recognized the existence of norms in the teacher subculture that required "strictness" and the maintenance of social distance between teachers and pupils. Moreover, they realized that others were apt to equate control and teaching, and even label as poor teachers those using more permissive methods.[6] Therefore, they made substantial efforts to adapt by talking or acting tough with regard to pupils. This kind of on-stage behavior[7] occurred in places of high visibility, that is, in front of colleagues. Here it might be noted that it is especially fruitful to observe behavior in places of high visibility to gather information on norms. People tend to conform in public and sin in secret. The faculty lounges, the assembly, and the

cafeteria were locations where teachers were highly visible to their colleagues.

In the faculty lounges, newer teachers were on-stage in what were, in one sense, off-stage locations. The school had separate lounges for men and women teachers. In the men's lounge, the primary topics of discussion were sports and students. The sports talk focused on the national and regional levels and on the school's extensive athletic program. The following kinds of discussion predominated with regard to students: boasting about the uncompromising manner in which a difficult discipline problem had been handled; ridiculing students, especially their answers to teacher questions and tests, and quite aggressive references to students considered to be hopelessly uncooperative. In the women's lounge, a similar although somewhat less pointedly aggressive pattern was followed, but sports were not much discussed. Also, women teachers tended to "gossip" more than the men teachers concerning students. This included more discussion of a student's family, especially of brothers and sisters, and occasionally even parents, who had preceeded him at the school.

Newer teachers were frequent participants in these faculty lounge discussions. It was easy for them to join with the group in joking about student shortcomings. To do so required only verbalization and it usually resulted in a sympathetic response from colleagues. Silent acquiescence was the strongest rejoinder we observed. It would have been difficult to take exception to the comments made about students in this setting because of the social pressures involved, and no one did.

Blau and Scott have discussed the "scapegoating" of clients on the part of staff members in a public employment agency.[8] They pointed out that such behavior has several functions. It furnishes an escape valve for the release of aggressive feelings against clients in a relatively harmless form, and it provides social approval from peers which helps to relieve feelings of guilt for not having done a more effective job with clients. While such behavior led to the reduction of staff tensions and increased social support, it also legitimated inconsiderate treatment of clients. These points appear to apply equally well to the teacher behavior just discussed. In addition, it should be noted that it is possible that on-stage behavior, at first inconsistent with underlying attitudes, will eventually lead to changes in attitudes. New attitudes toward clients, in this case, students, may subtly and gradually become internalized as individuals modify their verbalizations, perceptions, and opinions to fit those of the group.

Such considerations have important implications for understanding teacher socialization. They suggest the proposition that the socialization process results in less flexible attitudes toward pupils on the part of teachers, a point we shall return to later.

The cafeteria was another place of high visibility; but it provided a stage primarily for those teachers who were taking their turn at cafeteria duty, a kind of police patrol that had the prevention of disorder as its main assignment. There were several lunch periods beginning fairly early in the school day. Teachers who ate during the earliest lunch period were referred to as "the breakfast clubbers." The teachers ate in a room that was just off the main cafeteria but

which afforded a view of at least part of that larger room.

The most dramatic incident of on-stage teacher behavior we observed there illustrates, in rather exaggerated form, the kind of use to which cafeteria duty was put. A young teacher who we knew to be considered marginal by many of his colleagues, was on duty along with other teachers. He entered the teachers' lunch room and said simply, "Watch this." He then went into the main cafeteria, hovered near a group of students for a few moments and, on the commission of an expected offense on the part of one of the students, pulled the culprit out of his seat and proceeded to manhandle him. A few of the women teachers appeared to be bothered by the incident but most of the teachers expressed their approval. In the case of this teacher, such staging was of little avail. He soon left teaching "for something better outside of education." While the incident described could not be called typical, cafeteria duty continued to provide an opportunity, especially for some of the newer teachers, to parade their strictness before their colleagues.

The assembly was a place of considerably more tension for newer teachers. Here, it was not so easy to choose one's own battleground. Moreover, visibility was greatly enlarged; more people were present. Furthermore, teachers with homerooms, and this included most of the faculty, were considered to be responsible in a special way for the behavior of their charges. In addition, there was something special about the assemblies themselves. They were ceremonials that presented the public face of the school. Here, students were called upon to identify with the school and to show it in its best and truest light. In the main, this meant good order and good manners as defined in adult terms.

Teachers who felt that their hold on the students was uncertain, and some who preserved a less rigid relationship with students, knew that they would be subjected to the scrutiny of associates and superiors, and they looked forward to assemblies with large measures of dread and small measures of hope. Dread because of the spectre of a public failure; hope because of the possibility of a lucky success, and for some, the opportunity to show a stern demeanor and a proper concern for order, even if things went badly. These occasions furnished special testing grounds where teachers often made valiant efforts to "look good." Thus, in assmeblies, some of the most striking performances emanated from the audience.

The adaptations of newer teachers to the prevailing norms for strictness were only partially successful. One younger teacher reported that "no matter how strict you are, they still think you're soft on discipline." Since staging had its personal costs for such individuals, it was all the more frustrating when the strategy failed. Those newer teachers who were highly idealistic appeared to be most distressed. By an idealistic teacher I mean one who has primarily service-oriented motives and a strong commitment to teaching as noble or important work as contrasted with one who has primarily self-oriented motives and views teaching as just a job. Like other teachers, idealistic ones wanted to be accepted by their peers. But the options were limited and the choices hard. When norms for behavior within a social group are repugnant to a member of the group, he can engage in open conflict, withdraw from the group, or somehow adapt, and even this last course may be hazardous and expensive.

Pupil control was given priority in numerous ways in the subculture of the school we observed. I will provide a few more illustrations from our field notes. They range from the attitudes of the teachers toward guidance counseling to the curious case of the teacher who never sat down.

The first concerns the retired principal and occurred before our study but was mentioned frequently in interviews. During the last few years of his tenure, the principal was in poor health and the faculty, in the words of one of the teachers, "carried him;" when possible, they avoided adding to his work load. Instead of sending the more serious discipline cases to the office, the teachers handled them, or quite often, sent them to the guidance counselor. The counselor recognized the undesirablity of mixing guidance and punishment but all involved give higher priority to the maintenance of the discipline function. However, this arrangement was never satisfactory from the teachers' standpoint and it ended entirely when the new principal took over. Dissatisfaction stemmed from a belief that the guidance office did not fully support the teachers in discipline matters; instead, it undermined them by redefining the bases of student misbehavior. The teachers considered some students to be just plain troublemakers but the counselor dealt with these students within a more complex, clinical framework that served to contradict the teachers' definition of the situation.

Another interesting situation developed around the early administration of certain final examinations. These examinations were given to all of the students in certain subjects several weeks before the end of the school year to facilitate the accomplishment of necessary

paper work. The control function of grades was soon apparent. An unintended consequence of the early examinations was that an important deterrent was removed from the teachers' hands. It was no longer possible to use grades as a threat and it was reported that student motivation dropped substantially. The time was called the "lame duck session" by the teachers and it occasioned considerable griping on their part.

Our third vignette concerns the issue of smoking in the women teachers' lounge. Smoking was permitted in the men's lounge but not in the women's. A few of the bolder women teachers had an occasional cigarette in an out of the way closet that became known as the women's boiler room, but this was not a common practice. It was generally known that the new principal was not as opposed to smoking as his predecessor had been and the smokers among the women teachers made a concerted, and eventually successful effort to have the smoking ban removed. The main argument advanced by those who wanted the prohibition continued was that the students would smell smoke on the women teachers and thereby be encouraged to smoke themselves, perhaps in the lavatories. The point is that these teachers considered the argument based on discipline to be their strongest one; if women teachers smoked regularly at school, it would result in increased rule breaking by students.

Another example concerns the modes of address employed by the teachers. We noted that even teachers who were good friends addressed one another quite formally using the title "mister,""missus," or "miss" along with the last name of the person spoken to. It was interesting to take this simple observation as problematic and to follow up on it.

It soon became apparent that formal address was used when students were nearby or likely to be. The presence of students was the crucial factor. If a teacher used another teacher's name when talking with a student, the formal title was always employed. Less formal modes of address were utilized only when students were not present and even then, there was some carry over of the more formal. Of course, the point is that the use of titles functioned to maintain social distance and the superior-subordinate relationship between teachers and pupils.

Our final example concerns the teacher who never sat down. We had a number of interviews with the old principal. In one of them we asked him about faculty informal structure and this elicited some comments about individual teachers. He remarked of one of them that she was "dependable, worth her weight in gold," and added approvingly that, although she had been at the school for many years, he had never seen her sitting down in the classroom. This was considered symbolic of her alertness and good control.

Concern with pupil control was a salient feature of the teacher subculture. But, in educational organizations, control ought to be a means to instructional ends. Yet, instruction itself was seldom an overt concern of the teachers, at least in their interactions with one another. For example, instruction was almost never discussed in the faculty lounges.

Displacement of goals is usually defined as the treatment of a means as an end-in-itself, so that the means replaces the original end or goal.[9] In schools, discipline treated as an end rather than as a means to attention and learning would be an example of goal displacement.

Control goals appeared to us to displace instructional goals in a number of ways in the school studied, as our earlier analysis indicates.

Now, two instances of specific structures that failed to contribute to instructional ends as they were intended will be described. The first concerned what were called circles. A circle consisted of those teachers of the four "solid subjects" who taught the same students, along with guidance personnel and the principal who was a member of every circle but did not attend every meeting. The manifest purpose of the circles was better to meet student needs by coordinating the work of teachers, counselors, and administrators with regard to student problems. This was to be accomplished largely in periodic circle meetings. However, the circle meetings actually were used to come to a united front in the grading of students, particularly in the assignment of failing grades. A variety of data led to this conclusion but the following occurrence illustrated it rather well: a circle chairman had some difficulty setting a suitable meeting time for the circle and became anxious because "I don't want to be out on a limb with my F grades." Appropriately enough in terms of its latent functions, the circles met just prior to the close of each marking period.

Our second instance concerns faculty meetings. The old principal instituted what was to be a series of faculty meetings designed to increase each teacher's understanding of the total curriculum. Each department was to be in charge of one meeting during which the objectives, content, and methods of that department's instructuional program would be explained and discussed. The first of these meetings was sponsored by the Science Department. It consisted of a film on cancer and a few

minutes discussion of science materials. During the film, under cover of darkness, a number of teachers were observed leaving via the rear door of the rather large meeting room. Although the film had been dull, it was generally considered to be a natural way for the science teachers to deal with the unwelcomed responsibility for a faculty meeting. The idea of learning more about the total curriculum died a slow but easy death. It had no mourners. As a last comment on the faculty meetings, we noted that when the new principal presided at his firt meeting, he scored heavily with the teachers by remarking that he was "allergic to long meetings." The instances of the circles and the faculty meetings, respectively, show how goal displacement can be accompanied by aversion to risk taking and by ritualism.

Our field notes (and our recollections as well) contain additional events of some interest that occurred during our anthropological inquiry but those that have been presented will suffice for now. Some will be quick to remark that our data are necessarily selective. I agree. But, the integrity of the data was judged by the kind of meaningful integration that could be achieved. In other words, the more important parts of the picture were those that could contribute to the whole portrait. Other pieces of information might have potential significance but until more complete pictures were painted, it remained unrealized. We tried to remain open to all sorts of data and to alternative interpretations, but we were limited to the events that occurred and by our own ingenuity and inventiveness as observers and theorizers. We sought ideas and explanations; discrete bits of information could become useful only in such contexts.

In their studies of societies, anthropologists have used the notions of basic configurations and themes to refer to elements that pervade a culture in a basic way and influence its patterns of norms, structures, and values.[10] In the subculture we examined, pupil control appeared to be a dominant motif.

There is little doubt that the theme approach could be misleading in circumstances where it is employed without sufficient empirical warrant. At the same time, a great deal of research in education has had an especially narrow focus that has ignored the social system of which teachers are a part. In this sense, analysis of the teacher subculture, especially in configuration or in theme terms, tends to redress an imbalance.

The theme of pupil control fitted the general climate of the school we observed as we developed a feel for it. It fitted a great many of our observations, and as has been stressed, enabled us to put them together more coherently. It also fitted the traditional picture of schools as places that pupils seek devoutly to avoid, a view expressed in novels such as The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and in what might be called the lore surrounding schools.

Moreover, when the school is considered as an organizational type, additional grounds are added. Carlson has provided a framework for such an analysis based upon whether or not organization-client relationships are mandatory.[11] He notes that, in some service-type organizations, the organization controls the selection of its clients while in others, it does not; in some cases, clients can reject participation in the organization, in others, they cannot. These considerations lead

to a four-category classification scheme. Public schools fall in the category of organizations that have no control over client selection and where clients have no choice concerning their participation. That client control should be identified as central in such organizations seems quite reasonable. Indeed, studies of other organizations of the same type, such as prisons and public mental hospitals, often focus on problems of client control.

Prisons and public mental hospitals are, to use Goffman's term,[12] total institutions, and schools are not; also, in prisons and public mental hospitals greater emphasis is given to coercive controls than in schools.[13] Nevertheless, the similarities are instructive, provided they are pursued cautiously. In fact, information in the literature dealing with these similar, if somewhat alien organizations, helped to sharpen certain of the ideas gleaned from the field study.[14]

Some of these ideas eventually became hypotheses that were tested in a research effort that was narrower in focus than the field study but much larger in terms of the number of persons from whom data were gathered. Now, I would like to turn briefly to that work.

Here we examined what we called the pupil control ideology of educators. This was measured along a continuum that ranged from custodialism at one extreme to humanism at the other.[15] A custodial pupil control ideology stresses the maintenance of order, distrust of students, and a punitive, moralistic approach to pupil control. A humanistic ideology emphasizes an accepting, trustful view of pupils, and optimism concerning their ability to be self-disciplining and responsible.

We made a number of predictions concerning the relationship of organizational position and pupil control ideology. The proposition that those in a direct relationship with numbers of unselected clients will feel their status threatened, and be comparatively rigid in their client control ideology, led to the predictions that teachers would be more custodial in pupil control ideology than principals or counselors. We believed that elementary school pupils pose a lesser threat to controller status than secondary pupils because of their tender years, smaller size, and relative immaturity; and we predicted that secondary school teachers and principals would be more custodial in pupil control ideology than their elementary school counterparts.

We were also interested in teacher socialization and pupil control ideology. Data from the field study had suggested that, although newer teachers have quite permissive views, pupils pose a rather serious threat to their status, and increased rigidity in attitudes toward pupils is likely to be an outcome of teacher socialization. Our prediction was that teachers with more than five years' experience would be more custodial in ideology than teachers having five years' or less experience.

All of these predictions, as well as some others that I have not mentioned, were supported.[16] Furthermore, longitudinal data, gathered from a sample of teachers beginning with their student days, more directly support the proposition that increased custodialism in pupil control ideology accompanies teacher socialization.[17] A significance increase in custodialism occurred after student teaching, and again after the first year of teaching. This held for personnel at

both the elementary and secondary school levels.

To this point, I have sketched some aspects of the teacher subculture, and reported the saliency of pupil control as a feature of that subculture. In addition, pupil control ideology, treated as a variable, has been related to certain formal organizational structures and to teacher socialization.

While I think that the work described is interesting and useful, it has substantial limitations. In spite of the logic and fit that characterized the field study data, that research was conducted in a single school and it might apply less well to certain other situations. Pupil control would surely be less central in those schools where pupil clients found school especially attractive and the mandatory nature of the client-organization relationship was mitigated.[18] Yet, the notion of a teacher subculture is a serviceable one, even though the particular nature of the subculture might vary somewhat at a given time and change over time. Those who deal with the problems of curriculum change can hardly afford to ignore the social system that has to accommodate change.

Before proceeding to more direct commentary on curriculum change, let us very briefly consider some additional points concerning schools.

Schools are characterized by goal ambiguity.[19] While agreement on a large, superordinate goal like "educating each child to his fullest capacity" is functional in the sense that everyone, even adversaries, can subscribe to it, its specific implications are vague and its operational meaning, unclear. The partner of ambiguous goals is

lack of clear cut criteria of success, a characteristic of many organizations that have people rather than things as products. Furthermore, wide agreement on what constitutes effective teaching is lacking. In public schools, goals, success criteria, and appropriate work behavior are tinged with obscurity.

The school, as a public agency, also is characterized by relative weakness in political terms and by vulnerability to public pressures.[20] At the same time, the school is a domesticated organization,[21] nurtured and cared for by society. Public schools do not go out of business; as the saying goes, "school keeps."

While the public school faces few pressures for excellence in the sense that it need not be top flight to survive, nevertheless, it is vulnerable to other kinds of pressures and it must carry out a massive social task in a context of ambiguous goals, hazy success criteria, and a vague work technology.

Organizations and their personnel need a certain amount of stability. In fact, Thompson has cogently argued that the central problem for complex organizations is that of coping with uncertainty.[22]

Given all of the circumstances described, the school generally can be expected to be a cautious organization that will hazard little, react rather than lead, and even base many of its actions on the anticipated reactions of its publics. Numerous adaptations will occur.

On-stage behavior, especially in places of high visibility, has already been treated as an individual adaptation, but it can be employed at the organizational level as well. School systems ordinarily give wide publicity to their "innovations." These "innovations"

frequently are tangible physical things, and usually, having them is equated with using them well. Fortunate is the superintendent of schools who can say, "We have programed instruction," "We have language laboratories," "We have an ungraded school;" but pity the poor superintendent who says, "We have none of those things. All we have is a dedicated, highly competent faculty working constantly at doing the best possible job of teaching." The former are tangible and specific, the latter is not.

The school's efforts to present itself favorably are apt to encourage and promote fads and gimmicks but such efforts are very common. A more familiar name for them is public relations.

A kindred adaptation is found in the use of various structures that exist to keep the public informed, at least as far as formally stated objectives are concerned. PTA's and citizens' committees would be familiar examples. Basically, such structures function to mobilize support, coopt opposition, and legitimate the activities of the school. Carlson has observed that citizens' committees are used extensively in connection with the building of new schools in California but rarely in Pennsylvania.[23] His explanation was not that California's school administrators are more "democratic" than Pennsylvania's but that in California, but not in Pennsylvania, voter approval is necessary for bond issues to support school construction. The citizens' committee, then, was an adaptive response to a special form of vulnerability. The example is a useful one because it brings the general point into sharper focus.

Schools, like other organizations in modern society, have

become increasingly bureacratized. The division of labor and accompanying specialization that is a characteristic of bureaucracy is developing rapidly in schools. Once, the teacher was responsible for most of what went on in schools. Now, in addition to an enlarged administrative component, we have secondary and elementary school guidance counselors, school psychologists,various specialists in remedial work, particularly in reading, school social workers, and a host of staff specialists in the instruction and curriculum areas.[24]

My point is this: a latent function of specialization is the protection of the school in its relationship with its publics, especially in conflictful circumstances. An irate parent may have been able to hold his own with a teacher but imagine such a parent confronting "the team," a school psychologist, a counselor, a remedial teacher, perhaps the principal, and finally, the teacher, in the venerated "conference" setting. The cards are clearly stacked in the school's favor.

Another way in which schools adapt to vulnerability is through the use of rules. When rules are clear and are widely promulgated, a justification for imposing negative sanctions on rules breakers is supplied. Moreover, since rules are usually understood to apply to all, it can be claimed that they rest on an equalitarian base.

The adaptations described all tend to be protective of the school; they tend to reduce uncertainty in the school's relationship with its environment and probably make conflict a bit less burdensome for school personnel. In this connection, it is interesting that teachers, and especially school administrators, often employ the anal-

ogy of war in discussing their work; they describe themselves as being "on the firing line." Here, they gain some victories and suffer some defeats. There are occasional cease-fires but no lasting peace. Hence, the need for adaptation and strategic response.

If one grants even the general accuracy of our portrayal of the school in terms of its own subculture and in terms of its relationship with the wider social setting, then it would seem to follow that schools could hardly be construed as vital centers of educational change and experimentation.

Given such a situation, we would expect much of the change that does occur to eminate from outside sources. This is exactly what has happened in a number of curriculum areas, the prototype being the Physical Science Study Committee which has had an important affect on instruction in high school physics. As Clark indicates,[25] the pattern is one in which various private and public groups, with Federal support, work in concert to achieve a given goal. Note that such groups operate outside of the system of constraints that deter school personnel.

As Carlson point out, public education does not have an institutionalized change agent position.[26] There is no one who has as his major function the advocacy and introduction of innovations. Within school systems, the superintendent is probably the nearest thing to a change agent but the role is difficult because "he frequently must prescribe the change of his own practices."[27] School principals apparently are not change agents in any meaningful sense.[28]

The curriculum committee, composed primarily of teachers, is a widely used device, and given the ubiquitous ideology of participation,

it is also something of an article of faith. But, even though their stated purpose is to make recommendations regarding curriculum change, such committees appear to have little bearing on change in school systems and almost no significant decision making power. Their latent function is to legitimate courses of action already decided upon. In addition, they usually make a few minor decisions.

Thus, one can think of numerous instances of curriculum committees considering, say, the new mathematics; but can anyone point to a case where the committee decided against incorporating the change? Usually, the committee examines a few courses of study, visits some schools having the innovation, then decides such things as which text to adopt. In the unlikely event that committee members begin to deviate from the script, remedies are available. A very common one is to bring in "experts" to consult with the committee. Such a treatment constitutes a dependable cure.

Perhaps, then, it is understandable that the work of curriculum committees is so often ritualistic and mechanical, a matter of going through the motions. It seems fair to say that most teachers hope to be able to avoid service on such committees. Exceptions are those teachers who desire to please the administration and, to use Griffiths' term, GAS (get the attention of superiors).[29]

Our analysis suggests how difficult and complex is the achievement of desired changes in schools. But difficult or easy, complex or simple, the effort is required if schools are to become more meaningful instruments of individual and societal fulfullment.

Few would argue with the familiar demands that more talented

individuals be recruited to enter education, or that teacher and administrator preparation programs be made stronger and more relevant. But even outstanding people prepared in excellent programs can become discouraged and defeated in systems that distort or displace instructional goals.

Structures that decrease the school's vulnerability to petty demands and increase its responsiveness to educational goals, and that protect and encourage idealistic teachers and administrators, are needed. Such structures would have to make better teaching itself a more visible and more central focus in the teacher subculture, and a status enhancing aim on the part of the subculture's participants.

To cite some simple examples, regular analysis by groups of faculty members of video tapes of their own teaching might be especially effective; and formalized connections between school systems and less vulnerable agencies such as universities, regional educational laboratories, or as yet undevised structures, in order to promote goal achievement, might have desirable results.

Furthermore, there is no reason why school personnel should not critically examine their own subculture, just as we have done. After all, adaptation to unquestioned norms only makes it less likely that such norms will change. Thus, on-stage behavior promotes "pluralistic ignorance" in schools,[30] which is apt to have a kind of snowballing effect that increases system rigidities.

In such examinations, we prefer an enlightenment model to an engineering one.[31] That means that emphasis is placed upon concepts and ideas that help to explain social systems rather than on a search

for specific solutions to particular problems of operation. In this, cooperation between social scientists and educators would be necessary. Even the possibility of resident social scientists in school systems does not seem far-fetched. But to successfully examine one's own institution requires of school personnel a scientific temper and a concern with explanations and theories rather than recipes.[32] These qualities do not appear to be in abundant supply at present but they should be cultivated.

In providing the research base for understanding schools as social systems, the type of work I presented earlier appears to have special promise. It blends theoretical ideas and practical illustrations rather well, and it seems basic to the problem of educational change. Numerous studies of this kind would add much to our knowledge of schools.

Educational research has depended rather heavily upon the concepts of learning psychology and on a measurement methodology. This emphasis, so useful in some ways, has resulted in an imbalance in our research efforts. In terms of methodological considerations, more attention should be given to coherence and theoretical meaning. These criteria seem particularly appropriate in a field like education where researchers should seek both to understand phenomena and to present their insights in forms that have relevance for practice.

Notes

1. Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1932). An excellent review of Waller's work can be found in Charles E. Bidwell, "The School as a Formal Organization," Handbook of Organizations, ed. James G. March (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965).

2. The Junior High School study is considered in D. J. Willower and R. G. Jones, "Control in an Educational Organization," Studing Teaching, ed. J. D. Rath, et al. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967); D. J. Willower, "Barriers to Change in Educational Organizations," Theory into Practice, 2 (December, 1963); and D. J. Willower "Hypotheses on the School as a Social System," Educational Administration Quarterly, 1 (Autumn, 1965). The later hypotheses testing work is found in D. J. Willower, T. L. Eidell, and W. K. Hoy, The School and Pupil Control Ideology, (University Park, Pa.: Penn State Studies Monograph No. 24, 1967).

3. See Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, "Discovery of Substantive Theory: A Basic Strategy Underlying Qualitative Research," The American Behavioral Scientist, 8 (February, 1965).

4. For similar findings see Edwin M. Bridges, "Teacher Participation in Decision Making," Administrator's Notebook, 12 (May, 1964); and Howard S. Becker, "The Teacher in the Authority System of the Public School," Complex Organizations: A Sociological Reader, ed. Amitai Etzioni (New York: Holt, Rinehardt and Winston, Inc., 1961), especially pp. 246-49.

5. Alvin W. Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1954), pp. 79-83. The new manager in the gypsum plant Gouldner studied was often compared unfavorably with the former manager, just as the second wife in the DuMaurier novel was plagued by unfavorable comparisons to the first wife, Rebecca.

6. One investigator has noted that ability to control was often equated with ability to teach. See C. Wayne Gordon, The Social System of the High School (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), especially pp. 42-45.

7. Irving Goffman discusses on-stage behavior in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1959).

8. Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott, Formal Organizations (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 84-85.

9. Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (2d ed. rev.: Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), p. 199.

10. For a general discussion see George E. Kneller, Educational Anthropology: An Introduction (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), Chap. 1. See also M. E. Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture" American Journal of Sociology, 51 (November, 1945).

11. Richard O. Carlson, "Environmental Constraints and Organizational Consequences: The Public School and its Clients," Behavioral Science and Educational Administration, ed. Daniel E. Griffiths (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

12. Irving Goffman, Asylums (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1961).

13. Amitai Etzioni, A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations (New York: The Free Press, 1961).

14. Two excellent treatments of this literature that are now available are Donald R. Cressey, "Prison Organizations," and Charles Perrow, "Hospitals: Technology, Structure, and Goals," both in the Handbook of Organizations, op.cit.

15. The concepts of custodialism and humanism were adapted from Doris C. Gilbert and Daniel J. Levinson, "'Custodialism' and 'Humanism' in Mental Hospital Structure and in Staff Ideology," The Patient and the Mental Hospital, ed. Milton Greenblatt, et al. (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1957).

16. See Willower, Eidell, and Hoy, op.cit.

17. W. K. Hoy, "Organizational Socialization: The Student Teacher and Pupil Control Ideology," Journal of Educational Research, 61 (December, 1967); and W. K. Hoy, "Pupil Control Ideology and Organizational Socialization: The Influence of Experience on the Beginning Teacher," The School Review, in press.

18. For an interesting study that examines variations in goals and control structures in six correctional institutions for juveniles see David Street, Robert D. Vinter, and Charles Perrow, Organization for Treatment (New York: The Free Press, 1966).

19. See Matthew B. Miles, "Planned Change and Organizational Health: Figure and Ground," Change Processes in the Public Schools, Richard O. Carlson, et al. (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965) for an incisive analysis of this and other features of public schools. His "Some Properties of Schools as Social Systems," forthcoming, is an even more extensive treatment of the topic.

20. Raymond E. Callahan has underscored the vulnerability of the school administrator in his relationships with the public in his Education and the Cult of Efficiency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

21. This term is Richard O. Carlson's. See "Environmental Constraints and Organizational Consequences: The Public School and Its Clients," op.cit.

22. James D. Thompson, Organizations in Action (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1967).

23. Richard O. Carlson, "Environmental Constraints and Organizational Consequences: The Public School and Its Clients," op.cit., pp. 262-63.

24. For commentary on the counselor position in terms of social system considerations see D. J. Willower, W. K. Hoy, and T. L. Eidell, "The Counselor and the School as a Social Organization," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 46 (November, 1967).

25. Burton R. Clark, "The Sociology of Educational Administration," Perspectives on Educational Administration and the Behavioral Sciences, W. W. Charters, Jr., et al. (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965).

26. Richard O. Carlson, "Barriers to Change in Public Schools," Change Processes in the Public Schools, op.cit.

27. Ibid., p. 4.

28. For studies that show the limitations of the principalship as a position that influences educational change see Daniel E. Griffiths, "The Elementary School Principal and Changes in the School System," Theory into Practice, 2 (December, 1963); and John Wiens, "Influence Structure and Innovations," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, mimeo., 1968).

29. Daniel E. Griffiths, et al., "Teacher Mobility in New York City," Educational Administration Quarterly, 1 (Winter, 1965).

30. See the discussion of pluralistic ignorance in schools in Bruce J. Biddle, "Roles, Goals, and Value Structures in Organizations," New Perspectives in Organizational Research, ed. W. W. Cooper, et al. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964).

31. Morris Janowitz discusses these notions in his foreword to Organization for Treatment, op.cit.

32. For a more extensive discussion see my, "The Professorship in Educational Administration: A Rationale," The Professorship in Educational Administration, ed. D. J. Willower and J. A. Culbertson (University Park and Columbus: The Pennsylvania State University and the University Council for Educational Administration, 1964).